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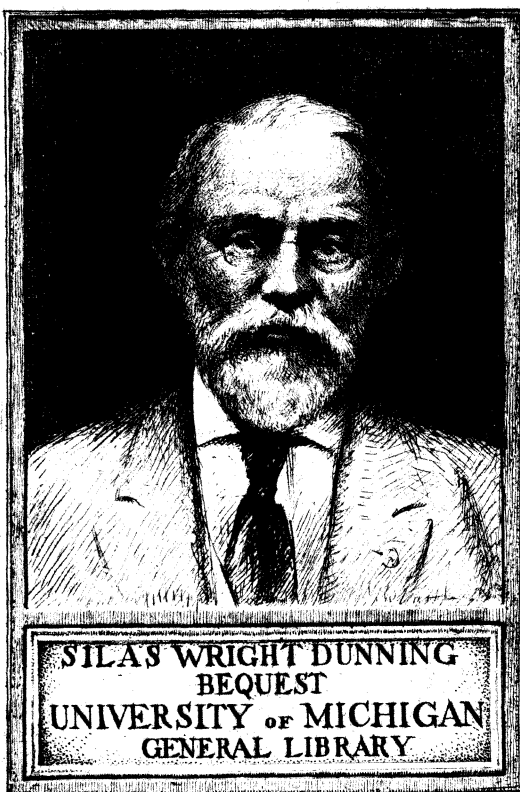
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“UNWRITTEN LITERATURE OF HAWAII: THE SACRED SONGS OF THE *HULA*.”

BY N. B. EMERSON, A.M., M.D.

OUR Library is indebted to the Smithsonian Institution of America for a copy of the above work, which has just been published by the Institution. It is a volume of two hundred and eighty-eight pages devoted to the ceremonies connected with the *Hula* dances and songs of Hawaii, and contains a great many of the songs with their translations, accompanied by a large number of valuable notes, and in a few instances the musical notation of the songs.

Dr. Emerson is known as the author of various publications relating to Hawaiian Native matters, among which we may particularly note his interesting paper on “The Long Voyages of the Hawaiians”—a paper which appeals to us as bringing the Hawaiians into touch with the Maoris as noted voyagers in the Pacific, and in one of which is introduced an incident well known to Maori tradition, namely, that of the death of the greedy child who was killed and buried in the chips from the hewing out of the great canoe then preparing for its lengthy voyage from the central Pacific to Hawaii. Dr. Emerson is also the translator and editor of “Hawaiian Antiquities (Moolelo-Hawaii),” by David Malo, a description of Hawaiian life, history, arts, customs, etc., written by a well informed native, a work which must remain the authority for many things Hawaiian for all time.

One thing that strikes us with some surprise in Dr. Emerson’s latest work is the sacred character he ascribes to the whole of the ceremonies, songs, etc., connected with the *hula*. He says (p. 11), “The *hula* was a religious service, in which poetry, music, pantomime, and the dance lent themselves under the form of dramatic art to the refreshment of men’s minds.” It may, perhaps, be considered an impertinence to differ from so excellent a Hawaiian scholar as the author, but, we have always understood, the *hula* is the Hawaiian representative of the Samoan *siva*, the Tahitian *upaupa*, the Rarotongan *eva*, and the Maori *haka*, which are not, we think, in any sense of a sacred character; but rather performances of a popular character intended to amuse, and in their more ancient aspects were of a somewhat gross character. This,

at any rate, is the character of the *siva* and the *haka* at the present day, and the *eva* and the *upaupa* did not differ, according to the accounts of early writers who witnessed them in their full force of lasciviousness before the performers became aware that the actions and wordings of the accompanying songs were shocking to civilized notions.

It is possible, however, that some justification for the author's views may be discerned in the performances of the '*Arioi* societies of Tahiti, long since extinct; for some of their entertainments were probably of a quasi-sacred character. And it is, moreover, possible that the long series of *evas* introduced into Rarotonga by the navigator and chief, Tangiia, on his return from his lengthy voyage to—as we hold—Indonesia, in the thirteenth century, may have partaken more of a sacred character in connection with the *Takurua* festivals, than the performances as we know them in modern times. In Mangaia island of the Cook Group, these performances took on a highly dramatic character, and were mostly of an historical character. Dr. W. Wyatt Gill, B.A., has very fully described them in his "*Savage Life in Polynesia*."

But, however it may be, whether the sacred character of the *hula* be maintained or not, Polynesian scholars will thank Dr. Emerson for thus preserving much ancient lore of the race. There are some points in his book which will have an interest outside Hawaii, and amongst them the following:—

On page 65 is mentioned the Maori ancestor and navigator Whiro (Hilo in Hawaii).

Page 100, we see the name Hawaii-akea, which is familiar to Maoris as a name for the 'fatherland,' *i.e.*, Hawaiki-atea.

Page 119. Of the island of Kauai—the north-west of the group, formerly Tauai—it is said, "It is a matter of observation that on the island of Kauai both the special features of its spoken language and character of its myths and legends indicate a closer relationship to the groups of the Southern Pacific, to which the Hawaiian people owe their origin, than do those of the other islands of the Hawaiian Group." With this compare the Maori tradition given in this Journal, Vol. VII., and in "*Hawaiki*," p. 50,* to the effect that whilst living in Hawaiki (Tahiti) they obtained their *kumaras* from an island called Tawai, which, it is suggested, is a recollection of this closer connection with Tauai (or Kauai) referred to by the author.

Page 139. In describing the vocal execution of Hawaiian music, the author goes on to say—" . . . the peculiarity of which was a sustained and continuous outpouring of the breath to the end of a certain period, when the lungs again draw their fill. This seems to

* Whitcombe and Tombs', Limited, 3rd edition, Christchurch, 1910.

have been an inheritance from the old religious style of prayer-recitation which requires the priest to repeat the whole incantation to its finish with the outpour of one lung full of breath." Now this is Maori exactly; the invocations—at any rate in some of them, and amongst some tribes—were repeated with an even uninterrupted intonation, until the reciter was out of breath, and any break or the omission of a single word destroyed the efficacy of the utterance. In long invocations, the words *ooi* are often found, and this denoted the exhaustion of the reciter's breath, and at the same time it meant 'so be it.' After this, in some cases, the rest of the invocation was taken up by another priest at the point of break, and thus the continuation of the whole was secured in unbroken sequence. Dr. Emerson goes on to say, "Satisfactory utterances of those old prayer-songs of the Aryans, the *mantras*, was conditioned likewise on it being a one-breath performance." This is certainly the case, and, moreover, the solution of continuity in the recitation had the same baneful effect in the invocation, and on the priest as amongst the Polynesians—another point of 'Aryan-contact.'

Page 194. In the *mele* (which means a song, in Hawaiian; cf '*Na mele ai-moku*,' a collection of songs relating to the chiefs—*ai-moku* = 'island eaters'—a word which appears to have become obsolete in Maori, though Mr. John White gives one instance, *mere-uha*, as a word meaning a song, and perhaps is connected with *umere*, a song, or shout of triumph) on this page we find an interesting reference to historical characters well known to Maori tradition; but in the *mele* the proper names are treated as ordinary words, and translated thus:—

5 A papa-enaena, wai hau	On a lava plate, now hot, now cold;
A wa'a kau-hi,	Now 'tis a canoe full-rigged for sea;
Haila pepe-mua me pepe-waena	There are seats at the bow, amidships and aft;
O pepe ka muimui	Baggage and men—all is aboard,
O kiele i na ulu.*	And now the powerful thrust of the paddle.

Now Papa-enaena, Waka (or Whaka) -tauhi, Pepe-mua, Pepe-waenga, and Pepe-te-muimui, in a long and interesting genealogical table before me, are all shown as the children of Tu-huruhuru and his wife Apa-kura, who loom so largely in Maori and Rarotongan traditions in connection with the deeds of the younger of this family, Whakatau-potiki (or Whakatau-ihi) in the storming and burning of the temple of Te Uru-o-manono. Another character connected with both the Maori and Rarotongan versions of the drama of Apa-kura and the burning of this temple is Orokewa (or Poporo-kewa), and on p. 162, Dr. Emerson in a note says, "Ke Olo'ewa. (Te Orokewa in

* It must be remembered that Hawaiian "k" is Maori "t," and Maori "k" is not pronounced in Hawaiian.

Maori.) The name of one of the old gods belonging to the class called *akua noho*, a class of deity that were sent by the necromancers on errands of demoniacal possession." Judging from these names it would appear that the Hawaiians, whilst retaining them as words in the poetic form, have only a dim remembrance of the story which looms so largely in the traditions of Southern Polynesia.

Pages 186, 187. We have here a series of *meles* connected with Pele, the goddess of the volcano Kilauēa, about whom there are several legends—one has lately been published in the "Seventeenth Annual Report of the Hawaiian Historical Society," 31st December, 1909. It is suggested that further study of the Pele legends will probably show their affinity with some of the Asiatic myths connected with the astronomical dates of year determination. This, however, is not the place to pursue that subject. Here it is sufficient to indicate that the Hawaiian goddess is probably connected with Maori legends of Para-whenua-mea, or the Deluge legend. On p. 187, Dr. Emerson gives the following lines in *He oli*, or song, in which word we recognise the Maori equivalent of *oriori*, a lullaby, frequently full of historical matter:—

Ka wa'a o Kane-kalai-honua	The canoe of Kane the world-maker
Holo mai ke au, a'ea'e Pele-honua-mea	The tides swirl, Pele-honua-mea o'er mounts them
A'ea'e ka Lani, ai puni'a i ka moku.	The god rides the waves, sails all about the island :

In this we see Pele with an epithet, that is the exact equivalent of Para-whenua-mea, for, (it is perhaps unnecessary to say that) in all the dialects of Polynesia the letters 'a' and 'e' are constantly interchangeable; hence Pele=Para. To quote from the report of the Historical Society alluded to above: "But the latter story says that Pele came with the great flood known among the Hawaiians as Kaiahinalii. This flood accompanied her through all her ocean journey, overwhelming many islands, until at last she landed at Niihau" (the island at the extreme north-west of the Hawaiian group). In this extract it is clear that Pele is connected with the traditional deluge stories preserved by nearly all branches of the Polynesian race. Para-whenua-mea, with the Maoris, is frequently used as an equivalent for the deluge; and expresses, I suggest, the complete effacement of nature, with nothing remaining but the *debris* of a former world. It is so used also poetically as a synonym for a great destruction or calamity to mankind.

The Rarotongans have embodied in their traditions the knowledge of Pele under the form of Pere, and in connection with Maui's visit to the Hawaiian Islands (see "Hawaiki" p. 149). Under the same name she is known to the Paumotu Islanders, as Mr. J. L. Young tells us in this Journal, Vol. VI., p. 109.

Page 189, we have in the line, "*E waiho aku ana o Ahu*" ("She's bidding adieu to Oahu"), a statement of the deepest interest to Maori scholars, for here in a note Dr. Emerson says, "O Ahu. In this instance the article still finds itself disunited from its substantive. To-day we have Oahu and Ola'a;" also referred to on p. 90. Now this Ahu, according to a Maori tradition, is the name of the land that one of the great migratory expeditions of six canoes, after coming from the far west and sailing north-east before the monsoon, is the land they made, and adjacent to it—according to Maori tradition—are the islands Maui (named after their ancestor Maui), Maui-taha, and Maui-pae, two smaller islands, which, no doubt, are those now known to the Hawaiians as Molokai and Lanai, lying to the north-west of Maui Island. From Ahu, says Maori tradition, the course to that Hawaiki from whence their ancestors came to New Zealand (*i.e.*, Tahiti) was south. This, however, is not the place to deal with this particular migration; the interest is in the identification of Oahu of the Hawaiian Islands with the Ahu of Maori tradition.

Page 197. Here we have a note of very great interest in reference to Kumu-kahi (Tumu-tahi in Maori), the most easterly cape in the Hawaiian group, with its stone pillars, probably connected with sun worship, as also Phallic worship. But to discuss this question would lead us beyond the limits of a review.

Page 224. Note: "*Hiwa-uli*, an epithet applied to the island of Hawaii," is interesting as probably indicating the locality so frequently mentioned in Rarotongan traditions under the local form, Iwa or Iva.

May we suggest to Dr. Emerson that he would confer a further boon on Polynesian scholars if he would employ his great knowledge of the Hawaiian language, their traditions, customs, etc., to the translation of at least some of the *meles* in "*Na mele ai-moku*," many of which are undoubtedly of great historical interest.

We wish respectfully to congratulate the Smithsonian Institution upon the fact of their having recognised Hawaii as part of their sphere of action by thus publishing an important work relating to this new acquisition of the United States.

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